DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 234 701 HE 016 627

AUTHOR Lavin, David E.; And Others
TITLE Socioeconomic Origins and Educational Background of an Entering Class at CUNY: A Comparison of Regular and Special Program Enrollees. Fall 1980 Freshman Cohort Study: Report No. 1.
INSTITUTION City Univ. of New York, NY. Office of Institutional Research and Analysis.
PUB DATE 83
NOTE 60p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Academic Aptitude; *College Freshmen; *Economically Disadvantaged; *Educational Background; Higher Education; *High Risk Students; Longitudinal Studies; Questionnaires; *Socioeconomic Status; Student Attitudes; *Student Characteristics
IDENTIFIERS *City University of New York

ABSTRACT

The demographic, educational, and personal attributes of the 1980 entrants to The City University of New York (CUNY) were studied, and a 6-year longitudinal analysis was undertaken. Of the total freshmen class of 31,890, 11,625 students completed a questionnaire concerning their social origins, financial resources, employment situations, and educational attitudes and aspirations. Additional sources of study data were high school background records; scores on tests in mathematics, reading, and writing; and registration information indicating the level of enrollment (senior or community college), and status as a special program or regular admission student. It was found that relative to college students nationally, CUNY freshmen are older, and more likely to be minority groups and economically disadvantaged. Special program students appear to have academic difficulties as a result of their extremely disadvantaged educational backgrounds. However, CUNY continues to enroll substantial proportions of students from more secure economic and educational backgrounds. A social background questionnaire is appended. (SW)

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The City University of New York

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Fall 1980 Freshman Cohort Study: Report No. 1
Office of Institutional Research and Analysis

Spring 1983

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SOCIOECONOMIC ORIGINS AND EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND OF AN ENTERING CLASS AT CUNY: A COMPARISON OF REGULAR AND SPECIAL PROGRAM ENROLLEES

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Spring 1983

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PREFACE

"Socioeconomic Origins and Educational Background..." is the first in a series of reports from the Fall 1980 Freshman Cohort Project. This report analyzes the demographic, educational and personal attributes of the 1980 entrants to The City University of New York. The comparative perspective employed by the authors is especially valuable in helping us to understand the differences and similarities between senior college and community college students, between those enrolled in regular programs and those in the special (SEEK and College Discovery) programs, and between the CUNY freshmen and their national counterparts.

David Lavin, Professor of Sociology at Lehman College and The Graduate School, originated the project and now co-directs it with James Murtha, Director of Analytical Studies in the University's Office of Institutional Research and Analysis.

The Fall 1980 Freshmen Cohort Project is partially funded through a separate budget allocation for research on the SEEK program.

Barry Kaufman
University Dean

SUMMARY

At the end of the 1960s, the City University of New York shifted from an institution recognized as one of the most selective in American public higher education to one that implemented the nation's most far-reaching open access policy. While all of New York's major social groups benefited from the new policy, this shift brought about significant changes in the racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic composition of its student body. The proportion of Blacks and other minorities shot up dramatically as a result of open admissions. So too did the proportions of low-income students and of youth with weak educational backgrounds.

This report focuses upon the characteristics of CUNY entrants as the University has entered the 1980s. The changes wrought by the open admissions policy are still in evidence a decade later. Relative to a national yardstick CUNY entrants are economically poorer, more likely to be of minority origins, older, and are more likely to feel that they will need extra help (remediation) in basic skills areas. And compared to the regular CUNY students, those who come to the University under its special SEEK and College Discovery programs are especially impoverished and have come more often from high school tracks where they failed to receive opportunities to take basic college preparatory work. In this light the remedial task facing the University and especially the SEEK component appears critical inasmuch as CUNY's effort to broaden educational opportunity has embraced not only access but also educatiónal outcome.

Both in terms of its special students and for substantial proportions of regular admits, it appears that CUNY has a virtual monopoly on the economically disadvantaged segment of New York City's population-- a monopoly quite consistent with the University's historic mission. Nonetheless, one should not lose sight of the diversity in the student body attracted to CUNY. The University has continued to attract very substantial proportions of able students. For example, two-thirds of all regular admissions students entering CUNY senior colleges compiled high school averages of 80 or higher, and almost 20 percent come from more economically secure backgrounds. How CUNY can simultaneously attract and well serve both the educationally and economically secure student and the one who enters college carrying heavy economic and educational burdens is a task that the University will continue to face as it moves through the 1980s in a climate of fiscal scarcity.

INTRODUCTION

During the 1975-76 financial crisis of New York City, important changes occurred at the City University of New York (CUNY). There were modifications in the University's academic and fiscal policies, large reductions in enrollment, and shifts in the composition of its student body. Subsequently, dropout rates also increased. The reasons for this increase are not clear. The imposition of tuition, more stringent standards governing academic progress, and changes in the composition of entering freshmen classes are illustrative of the factors that, singly or in combination, may be affecting retention at the University. This rise in dropout rates has been a matter of concern within the University. One reason is that high rates threaten to undercut CUNY's aim of providing educational opportunity in a way that embraces both access and outcome. Adding to the concern is that increases in dropout have coincided with a period of declining enrollment. In 1979 the University's Trustees noted that "It is clear that the retention of current and prospective enrollees must become a major focus of attention during the coming decade." (Office of the Chancellor, 1979).

In response to the University's concern, a longitudinal study of the fall 1980 freshmen was initiated. The study has a number of purposes. One is to consider applicants to CUNY, seeking to identify the characteristics distinguishing those who

enroll in CUNY from those who enroll elsewhere and from those who do not enroll in any postsecondary institution. The aim is to identify types of students whose likelihood of enrollment in CUNY might increase as a result of pre-admission counseling and advising (for example, low-income students who perceive themselves as financially unable to attend).

Another purpose is to identify factors associated with dropout and retention as the 1980 freshmen move through their college careers. Broadly speaking, dropout rates are affected by three factors: (1) students' social origins, educational backgrounds, and features of their current life situations (for example, their employment status); (2) the quality of academic performance in college; (3) characteristics of the college environment.

This report is concerned with the first set of factors. It presents a profile of the social and educational backgrounds, aspirations, and life situations of the fall 1980 freshman cohort, paying particular attention to comparisons between regular and special admissions (SEEK and College Discovery) students in the senior and community colleges of CUNY.

A massive body of social science research documents the strong effects of social origins and educational background upon students' educational attainment (see, for example, Featherman and Hauser, 1978; Jencks, et. al., 1979). Though ambitious

opportunity programs such as the CUNY open-admissions policy help to broaden the pool of college-educated men and women from disadvantaged backgrounds, social origins impose constraints: students from more advantaged backgrounds have higher probabilities of collegiate success. Thus, in following the academic careers of an entering class as we are doing for the 1980 freshmen, it is obviously important to begin by considering the personal histories which they bring with them. These histories constitute the raw material that enters CUNY each year and thus define to an important degree the educational task faced by the University in its efforts to translate educational opportunity into successful academic outcomes. The data presented in this report provide the base for a succeeding report that will consider how student backgrounds and life situations are related to academic achievement, retention and dropout.

DESIGN OF THE STUDY AND NATURE OF THE DATA

This longitudinal study will follow the academic careers of the fall 1980 freshmen over a period of six years, aiming to identify the determinants of academic outcomes. The point of departure for the project is a detailed social background survey mailed in summer 1980 to 52,366 students who had applied to CUNY as first-time freshmen (A copy of the questionnaire is presented in Appendix A.) The survey requested a wide range of information about students' social origins, financial resources, employment situations and educational attitudes and aspirations. The number

of respondents to the survey questionnaire was 15,727. Of these, 11,625 subsequently enrolled in CUNY. This sample represents about 36 percent of the total freshman class of 31,890.

A second type of data used in this report are high school background records. This information, collected by the University's centralized admissions office for the 52,366 freshman applicants, contains data on numerous variables including: (1) college admissions average, a measure of the student's grades in all academic courses deemed by the University to be college preparatory in nature (e.g., English, mathematics, science, etc.); (2) rank in high school graduating class; (3) the number of college preparatory courses taken (this variable reflects the breadth of students' exposure to college preparatory work).

To obtain an overview of entering students' academic preparedness and for purposes of placement into remedial courses, CUNY administers to entering freshmen university-wide tests in mathematics, reading and writing. Our files contain the raw scores for each test and indicate whether the student passed or failed each.

A fourth data source for this report is the registration file assembled for the freshman population by the University's Office of Institutional Research and Analysis from information transmitted to it by each of the CUNY colleges. This file

indicates the level of enrollment in CUNY (senior or community college), and status as a special program or regular-admissions student.

The registration data, high school transcript information, skills assessment test scores and social background survey have been combined so that the record of each enrollee who responded to the survey also contains information on high school performance and registration in CUNY. This merged file is used to describe and compare the characteristics of regular and special admissions students in the senior and community colleges.

Though the sample of 11,625 students is a large one, it is being used to generalize to the 1980 cohort population of 31,890 cases, and it is necessary to determine whether the sample is representative by comparing it with the population, using measures common to both. The details of this comparison are presented in Appendix B. Overall, the pattern is clear. The sample contains a greater proportion of females, and among regular-admissions students in the senior colleges, the sample contains a greater proportion of more able students than the population. In all cases, however, the sample-population differences are small. In short, the comparisons indicate that the sample provides a good representation of the population.

SOCIAL ORIGINS

In presenting a background profile of the 1980 cohort, we shall examine several factors that are generally considered important in affecting students' academic careers. These include economic status, ethnicity, gender, age, and marital status.

Economic background

In the context of City University's mission to provide a means of social mobility for the poor and disadvantaged, our examination of social origins begins with a consideration of income, the most direct indicator of economic status. Overall, CUNY students in the 1980s continue to be a low-income group. Table 1 shows that among regular-admissions students, about a third who enrolled in senior colleges and more than half of those in the community colleges come from families with incomes of less than $10,000. Broadly speaking, these constitute the proportions eligible for full grants under New York State's Tuition Assistance Program (TAP).

TABLE 1

FAMILY INCOME BY TYPE OF ADMISSION: CUNY AND NATIONAL DATA[a]

Income	Senior Colleges		National 4 Yr Data[d]	Community Colleges		National 2 Yr Data[d]
	Regular	SEEK		Regular	C.D.	
Less than $4000	10%	30%	3%	20%	32%	5%
$4000-$9999	22	55	9	33	54	13
$10000-15999	25	13		22	11	
	51	14	45[c]	39	12	49[c]
$16000-24999	26	1		17	1	
$25000 or more	18	0	43	7	1	33
n[b]	(3075)	(1406)	-	(6464)	(680)	-

Source: Sample data

[a]Source for the national data: Alexander W. Astin, Margo R. King, and Gerald T. Richardson, The American Freshman: National Norms for Fall, 1980; Cooperative Institutional Research program, U.C.L.A. and American Council on Education: Los Angeles, 1980.

[b]These numbers are the maximum possible bases for all subsequent tables presenting sample data. The actual basis for any specific table may be slightly reduced by the missing values of the variable in question.

[c]These income intervals are combined for national data so as to match the CUNY data.

[d]Data are for public colleges. Four-year schools are those classified as of medium selectivity.

The generally low-income character of CUNY regular-admissions freshmen is highlighted by a comparison with national data. Where almost a third of CUNY's senior-college regular-admissions students and more than half in community colleges were below $10,000, this was true for less than 20 percent of two- and four-year public college students nationwide. At the upper end,

18 percent of the senior-college students are from families with incomes over $25,000, compared with a national figure of 43 percent.

Not unexpectedly, large proportions of special-program students come from impoverished homes. Almost a third of students in the SEEK and College Discovery programs were from families below the $4,000 level and more than 85 percent reported incomes of less than $10,000. Though CUNY's regular students are a low-income group, the economic position of the special-program students is obviously much worse.

This disparity between regular and special students is further indicated by the proportions receiving public assistance (welfare). As Table 2 shows, in the senior colleges 7 percent of regular students were from welfare families, compared with over 40 percent of SEEK students. In the two-year institutions close to half of those in College Discovery were from welfare families, compared with about a fifth of regular students.

TABLE 2

PERCENTAGES OF REGULAR AND SPECIAL PROGRAM STUDENTS RECEIVING PUBLIC ASSISTANCE (WELFARE)

Senior Colleges		Community Colleges	
Regular	SEEK	Regular	C.D.
7	41	18	47

Source: Sample data

These data show clearly that CUNY's special admissions programs are meeting one of the critical aims for which they were established: to provide access to college for students from poverty backgrounds. This is especially the case in the senior colleges, where SEEK students are almost six times more likely to come from welfare families than are regular students.

Stipends are one of the key mechanisms by which special programs attempt to make college possible for poverty level students. Students receive small amounts of money to cover some of their college expenses, and thereby reduce the need to work. The rationale is that by compensating for income from a job, a stipend allows a disadvantaged student more time to study. This role of special programs is shown in Table 3 which presents the proportions of regular and special students who were working or looking for work just prior to entering CUNY in fall 1980.

TABLE 3

JOB SITUATIONS OF REGULAR
AND SPECIAL PROGRAM STUDENTS

	Senior Colleges		Community Colleges	
Job Situation	Regular	SEEK	Regular	C.D.
Not Working	25%	41%	22%	35%
Working part-time[a]	68	55	56	61
Working full-time[b]	8	4	23	4

Source: Sample data

[a]Includes those reporting working part-time or looking for such work.

[b]Includes those reporting working full-time for looking for such work.

Both in the senior and community colleges special students were less likely than regular students to be working. They were also less likely to be working full-time. However, special program stipends apparently do not eliminate the need for work, since more than half of SEEK students and over 60 percent of those in College Discovery were working part-time.

Ethnicity

Because CUNY's special programs are targeted to the economically and educationally disadvantaged, it is not surprising that minorities are more heavily represented in them than among regular admissions students (Table 4).

TABLE 4

ETHNIC BACKGROUND OF REGULAR AND SPECIAL ADMISSIONS STUDENTS[a]

Ethnicity	Senior Colleges		National Data[d]	Community Colleges		National Data[d]
	Regular	SEEK		Regular	C.D.	
White[b]	50%	10%	89%	32%	10%	86%
Black[c]	22	47	9	35	45	7
Hispanic	19	39	1	29	43	6
Asian	9	4	1	4	2	1

Source: Sample data

[a]Those of American Indian background are excluded from the table.

[b]In the CUNY data those classified as white are of non-hispanic origin.

[c]In the CUNY data those classified as Black are of non-hispanic origin.

[d]For source of national data, see Table 1.

In senior colleges Black and Hispanic students comprised more than 85 percent of the 1980 SEEK freshmen compared with only 41 percent of regular entrants. If Asian students are included, then 90 percent of SEEK students are of minority origins.

Because minority students comprise a larger proportion of the community-college student body than in the four-year institutions, ethnic differences between regular and special admissions students are not quite so sharp in the two-year schools: 64 percent of regular students were Black or Hispanic, compared with 88 percent in College Discovery. Overall, despite

the often perceived equation of special programs and minority students, there was a white presence-- about 10 percent of the 1980 entrants to these programs were white.

An often overlooked aspect of CUNY's special programs is their impact on the distribution of minorities across the University's senior- and community-college tiers. Although there is disagreement among educational policy makers about the roles of senior and community colleges in enhancing educational opportunity, it is generally believed that four-year institutions provide greater long-term socioeconomic leverage than do community colleges. And at least in New York City, minority educators have viewed access to senior colleges as more valuable (Lavin, Alba, & Silberstein, 1981, note 104, p. 26).

The SEEK program has contributed substantially to the entry of minority youth to the four-year colleges, thus making the distribution of minorities in CUNY's senior and community colleges more nearly equal to that of whites than it would be otherwise. This is shown in Table 5 which presents the minority distribution across CUNY's two tiers of colleges, with and without the special program students included. An "index of stratification" has been calculated (it is the ratio of the percentage of Blacks and Hispanics at a given level of CUNY to their percentage of the entering students for that year). An index of less than 1.00 indicates minority underrepresentation relative to their overall proportions in the freshman class,

while an index of above 1 indicates their overrepresentation. The index is presented for four critical points in the University's recent history.

TABLE 5

STRATIFICATION OF MINORITIES ACROSS THE TWO LEVELS OF CUNY FOR SELECTED YEARS[a]

All Freshmen, Including Special Program Students

	Senior Colleges		Community Colleges		All of CUNY
Cohort	% Minority	Index of Stratification	% Minority	Index of Stratification	% Minority
1969	15%	.76	26%	1.32	20%
1970	22	.83	33	1.23	27
1975	40	.92	47	1.08	43
1980	46	.85	59	1.09	54

Regular-Admissions Students Only

	Senior Colleges		Community Colleges		All of CUNY
Cohort	% Minority	Index of Stratification	% Minority	Index of Stratification	% Minority
1969	4%	.43	17%	1.75	10%
1970	11	.64	27	1.48	18
1975	33	.89	42	1.12	37
1980	27	.58	56	1.21	46

Source: CUNY censuses for the years shown.

[a]The columns, "index of stratification" show the ratios of actual proportions to those expected if minority students were uniformly distributed across the levels of CUNY. For example, for 1969 the index of stratification for senior college regular-admissions students, .43, is obtained by dividing the senior college minority percentage for that year (4.1%) by the minority percentage in all of CUNY (9.5%). As shown in the table, all percentages are rounded.

In 1969, the last year before CUNY launched its open-admissions policy, the representation of minorities among senior college regular-admissions students was only 43 percent of what it would have been had minority students been uniformly distributed across the two levels of CUNY. However, with SEEK students included, the representation of minorities was 76 percent of what it would have been if they had been equally distributed across CUNY's two tiers. By 1975 minority students admitted outside of special programs were far more equitably distributed in CUNY than they had been at any previous time. Also apparent is a decline in the role of the SEEK program in reducing the underrepresentation of minorities in senior colleges (since the ratio for regular admissions minority students is very similar to the ratio when all students are included).

But after CUNY stiffened its entrance requirements for senior colleges in 1976, there was a dramatic increase in the importance of the SEEK program in assuring an equitable minority distribution. As Table 5 shows, without SEEK, senior college minority representation in the 1980 freshman class was only 58 percent of what it would have been if they were equally distributed in two- and four-year colleges. This minority underrepresentation was greater than at any time since open admissions began in 1970. Yet, with SEEK students included, the representation of minorities in senior colleges was not much less than it had been in 1975. In this respect then, SEEK has assumed

a renewed importance in creating a more equal distribution of minorities across CUNY's two tiers of colleges.

Demographic Variables: Gender, Age, Marital Status and Child Support

The majority of 1980 CUNY entrants were female (Table 6). Special program students were more likely to be women than regular admissions students: about two-thirds of the former were women, compared with 57 percent of the latter.

TABLE 6

PERCENTAGE FEMALE BY ADMISSIONS STATUS

Senior Colleges		National[a]	Community Colleges		National[a]
Regular	SEEK	Data	Regular	C.D.	Data
57	64	53	57	67	51

Source: Population data

[a]For source of national data, see Table 1.

This disparity between regular and special programs appears partly to be a consequence of gender differences among ethnic and racial groups in high school graduation rates. In 1980 about 55 percent of graduates from New York City's high schools were female (figures provided by New York City Board of Education). To a considerable degree this was a result of the fact that the majority of high school students are Black and Hispanic and that

among these groups, males are more likely to be high school dropouts. Thus, even though SEEK and College Discovery increase the probability of college-going among minority youth, these benefits flow mostly to females.

Among regular students the preponderance of females is due partly to the differential high school graduation rates among minority males and females. For whites, we speculate that a different process is involved: among many white families (especially the Irish and Italians who now account for the majority of white entrants to CUNY) limited financial resources are expended in sending males to more prestigious (and expensive) colleges than CUNY, since their educations are assumed to be the basic determinants of the financial status of their future families.

The age composition of the 1980 freshman class forces a reassessment of what is meant by the "traditional" age for beginning college (i.e. 17 or 18 years old). As Table 7 shows, substantial proportions of CUNY students were older.

TABLE 7

AGE BY ADMISSIONS STATUS

	Senior Colleges			Community Colleges		
Age	Regular	SEEK	National	Regular	C.D.	National
25 or more	7	9	1	28	9	3
20 - 24	9	17	3[a]	24	8	8[a]
19	12	22	14	14	25	20
18 or less	71	52	83	34	47	69

Source: Sample data

[a]Source for national data is shown in Table 1. Age interval for national data is 20-25.

In the senior colleges about 70 percent of regular students and only slightly more than half of SEEK entrants were eighteen or less. Relative to the national picture, CUNY's senior college students are an older group: 16 percent of regulars and 26 percent of SEEK entrants were twenty or older, compared with only 4 percent nationally.

In CUNY's community colleges regular entrants of traditional age are actually a minority: only a third were 18 years old or younger compared with almost 70 percent of entering community college students nationally. Close to 30 percent of the CUNY freshmen were over 25 years old, but nationally only 3 percent were in this age category. College Discovery students were not

quite as old as regulars, but still, less than half were eighteen or younger.

Especially among the regular admissions students, these findings suggest a different process of college-going in CUNY's two-year institutions: some high school graduates may enter the labor market and a few years later, feeling disillusioned about their futures, enter a community college in the hope that this will enhance their prospects. Others may wish to work in order to save money prior to college entry.

The age composition of CUNY's freshmen holds important implications for financial aid eligibility criteria, especially for the major source of aid, New York State's Tuition Assistance Program (TAP). Older students are more often employed full-time, but they must enroll as full-time students in order to be eligible for aid. Thus, they may find themselves in a bind: they cannot afford to give up their jobs, but if they reduce their course loads, they will lose their eligibility for TAP. In a forthcoming report, we shall examine the possibility that as a result of such pressures, their grades may suffer, leading to discouragement and a higher probability that they will drop out of college. Our data suggest that as presently constituted, TAP eligibility regulations are based upon assumptions about the age and employment characteristics of the college-going population that are inappropriate for a substantial segment of the CUNY

student body. These students might be better served if the TAP program provided eligibility for part-time students.

Partly because CUNY students are older than average, they are also more likely to be married than students at other public colleges (Table 8).

TABLE 8

PERCENT MARRIED BY ADMISSIONS STATUS

Senior Colleges			Community Colleges		
Regular	SEEK	National[a]	Regular	C.D.	National[a]
4	5	0.3	16	4	3

Source: Sample data

[a]Source for national data is shown in Table 1.

In CUNY's senior colleges the percentage of married students is not high for either regular or SEEK students (4-5 percent), but it is still greater than is the case nationally, where less than 1 percent of entering freshmen were married. In community colleges, a substantial minority, 16 percent, of regular admission students were married, a figure five times greater than the proportion of married students nationally. The proportion of married College Discovery students was about the same as that for community college students nationally.

It is likely that students who are supporting children face additional burdens, both financial and of time, which may hinder their ability to persist in college. Few regular students in senior colleges were supporting children at the time of college entry.

TABLE 9

PERCENT SUPPORTING CHILDREN
BY ADMISSIONS STATUS

Senior Colleges		Community Colleges	
Regular	SEEK	Regular	C.D.
5	13	24	15

Source: Sample data

As Table 9 shows, only 5 percent were doing so. SEEK students were more likely to be parents: more than 10 percent had children. In the community colleges the percentage of students supporting children was higher than in senior colleges, especially among regular entrants, where one quarter had parental responsibilities. The proportion of College Discovery students who had children was 15 percent.

In summary, CUNY's regular admissions students differ in important ways from the picture presented by national data. They are from markedly poorer economic circumstances. They are much more often from minority group origins, they are older, married

and supporting children, and they are far more likely to be working either full or part-time. A recent study shows that these economic and family conditions, especially the need to work, significantly delay students in completing their degrees (Kaufman, Murtha, and Warman, 1981). These factors are also associated with a lower probability of persistence in college.

CUNY's SEEK students face even greater hurdle than the regular entrants. They are overwhelmingly from impoverished minority group families, with substantial proportions receiving public assistance, and they are more likely than others to be supporting children, though they are not as likely as regular students to be working. Nonetheless, stipends do not eliminate the need to work: more than half of the SEEK students report part-time employment.

The backgrounds of College Discovery students also place them at a disadvantage relative to their regular admissions counterparts, but the differences between these two categories are generally not as sharp or as consistent as in the senior colleges.

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND AND ASPIRATIONS

Students' educational backgrounds may differ in a variety of ways. First there are family cultural resources (such as parental educational level) which can enhance the educational

achievement of the children. Then there are actual school achievements, including both school grades and the degree of exposure to college preparatory work. Both family educational context and actual school experiences determine students' academic self-concepts and aspirations. We now examine the educational backgrounds of special program and regular-admissions students, and, where appropriate, note comparisons between CUNY students and national data.

Family And Neighborhood Educational Context

The families and neighborhoods in which children grow up can have important effects on school achievements, educational aspirations, and expectations and knowledge about college. One important factor is parental educational attainment. Parents typically provide a cultural resource for children. More educated parents presumably bring to family life a wider range of information, interests, and cognitive competencies that add to the skills that children carry with them when they begin school. Better educated parents also can provide their offspring with substantial day-to-day advantages; for example, by providing help with homework.

As Table 10 shows, the educational attainments of the parents of special program students are strikingly lower than the parents of other students.

TABLE 10

PARENTAL EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT BY
ADMISSIONS STATUS: CUNY AND NATIONAL DATA

	Senior Colleges			Community Colleges		
Father's Education	Regular	SEEK	National	Regular	C.D.	National
8th grade or less	19%	35%	17%[a]	29%	37%	24%[a]
	>37	>61		>52	>65	
Some high school	18	26		23	28	
High school grad.	27	24	31	29	23	37
Some college or more	35	15	42[b]	19	12	34[b]
Mother's Education						
8th grade or less	19%	29%	13%[a]	28%	31%	19%[a]
	>37	>58		>50	>60	
Some high school	18	29		22	29	
High school grad.	37	28	50	34	28	49
Some college or more	26	14	28[b]	16	12	25[b]

Source: Sample Data for CUNY. For national data, source is as noted in Table 1.

[a]Categories are combined for national data to achieve comparability with the CUNY data.

[b]National figures do not include the categories: "post secondary other than college", "some graduate school". For this reason national figures total less than 100%.

More than a third of SEEK students' fathers and close to a third of their mothers never went beyond eighth grade. This was true for less than 20 percent of the parents of regular students.

Sixty percent of SEEK parents never completed high school, compared with slightly more than a third of regular parents. In the community colleges, where parental educational attainment is lower overall, the gap between parents of College Discovery and regular students is narrower than for the analogous categories in senior colleges. Nonetheless, the College Discovery parents had distinctly lower educational attainments.

In light of national data it appears that even CUNY's regular-admissions students typically came from family backgrounds with below average educational attainment. In four-year colleges nationally, only 17 percent of students' fathers had not graduated high school, while at CUNY 37 percent had not gone this far. In community colleges nationally, only about a quarter of students' fathers were not high school graduates, whereas at CUNY this was the case for 52 percent of regular-admissions freshmen. In this national context CUNY's special program entrants seem particularly disadvantaged in terms of parental educational resources.

Overall, CUNY students are especially likely to represent the first generation of their families to be attending college (Table 11).

TABLE 11

PERCENTAGE OF FIRST-GENERATION COLLEGE ATTENDERS[a] BY ADMISSIONS STATUS

Senior Colleges		Community Colleges	
Regular	SEEK	Regular	C.D.
59	79	74	82

Source: Sample data

[a]A first-generation attender is a student whose parents never attended college.

Three-quarters or more of special program students and of regular community college students were first-generation attenders. Even among senior college regular students, a majority, 59 percent, were the first generation in college.

Whether students have brothers or sisters who are or were in college partly conditions expectations that college is a natural stage in the life cycle. To possess such an expectation undoubtedly enhances the facility with which a student manages in the collegiate setting. With the exception of senior-college regular students, half of whom had college-attending siblings, only a minority of others had brothers or sisters with college experience. Special program students were worst off in this respect: forty-one percent of those in SEEK and thirty-five percent in College Discovery reported having siblings with a college background (Table 12).

TABLE 12

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WITH
SIBLINGS IN COLLEGE BY ADMISSIONS STATUS

Senior Colleges		Community Colleges	
Regular	SEEK	Regular	C.D.
50	41	42	35

Source: Sample data

Having friends who go to college undoubtedly provides an additional contribution to students' expectations that college is a natural stage in the life cycle. Across all admissions categories, the great majority of students had friends attending other colleges (Table 13).

TABLE 13

NUMBER OF FRIENDS GOING TO
OTHER COLLEGES BY ADMISSIONS STATUS

	Senior Colleges		Community Colleges	
Number	Regular	SEEK	Regular	C.D.
None	5%	9%	18%	11%
1 or 2	7	11	16	14
3 or 4	8	9	12	11
5 or more	80	71	54	64

Source: Sample data

In senior colleges regular entrants were more likely than SEEK students to have many (five or more) friends going to college. Community college entrants of either admissions status were less likely to have friends in college than their senior college peers. Moreover, the regular entrants to community colleges were less likely than other students to have five or more college-going friends. In all likelihood this is because the two-year regular students were, on average, older than others. Since a longer time had elapsed between high school and college, those older students were less likely to have acquaintances in college.

Having friends who enroll in the same college one is attending probably facilitates initial adjustment in the freshman year and provides a built-in support system that can reduce the chances of dropping out. Table 14 shows that in senior colleges regular students were considerably more likely than SEEK students to have friends who entered the same college with them.

TABLE 14

NUMBER OF FRIENDS GOING TO
STUDENT'S COLLEGE BY ADMISSIONS STATUS

	Senior Colleges		Community Colleges	
Number	Regular	SEEK	Regular	C.D.
None	27%	42%	49%	45%
1 or 2	26	28	24	28
3 or 4	17	13	10	11
5 or more	30	17	17	17

Source: Sample data

Only 27 percent had no friends on entry, compared with 42 percent in SEEK. Close to a third of regulars entered with 5 or more friends while less than 20 percent of SEEK students entered with such a "ready made" social network. Community college students were less likely to enter accompanied by friends, but there were no important differences in this respect between regular and College Discovery students.

To summarize, high educational attainment of parents and college-going on the part of siblings and friends create a social context that predisposes a student to stronger achievement in school, high educational aspirations and a successful academic career in college. For the most part CUNY students are less likely than students elsewhere to have had the benefits of this

social context. Special program students appear to have been particularly disadvantaged in these ways.

High School Background

Largely as a result of the residential segregation of racial and ethnic groups in the city and of academic performance in elementary and junior high school, the academic trajectories of most students are already set by the time they enter high school.

An overview of CUNY students' high school backgrounds is given by Table 15 which shows the average number of college preparatory courses taken by regular and special program students. Large disparities exist in the extent of college preparation.

TABLE 15

AVERAGE NUMBER OF COLLEGE PREPARATORY COURSES BY ADMISSIONS STATUS[a]

Senior Colleges		Community Colleges	
Regular	SEEK	Regular	C.D.
12.9	9.8	10.6	9.0

Source: Population data

[a]The number of courses shown are based upon those completed at the time of application to CUNY and thus do not necessarily reflect all work done in the senior year of high school.

The largest occur in the senior colleges where SEEK students averaged 3 fewer college preparatory courses than regular students. This is a very large difference because it means that SEEK students graduate high school with almost 1 year less academic preparation for college than regular students. In community colleges regular students also had more academic preparation than those in College Discovery, but the disparity is smaller than in the four-year schools.

How these summary differences in preparation translate into substantive course exposure is revealed dramatically by Tables 16 and 17 which show differences between regular and special admissions students in math and science preparation.

TABLE 16

HIGH SCHOOL MATHEMATICS PREPARATION[a] BY ADMISSIONS STATUS

	Senior Colleges		Community Colleges	
	Regular	SEEK	Regular	C.D.
Did not complete 9th year Math	8%	43%	21%	52%
Completed 9th year Math	18	35	34	38
Completed 10th year Math	21	13	20	7
Completed 11th year Math or Intermediate Algebra	53	9	25	3

Source: Sample data

[a]There are three reasons why students do not complete more advanced math courses: (1) By virtue of high school track placement they are not exposed to a course; (2) they took the course but did not pass it; (3) they did not elect certain courses.

TABLE 17

HIGH SCHOOL SCIENCE
PREPARATION[a] BY ADMISSIONS STATUS

	Senior Colleges		Community Colleges	
	Regular	SEEK	Regular	C.D.
Did not complete Introductory science	3%	6%	3%	9%
Completed Introductory Science	23	55	58	56
Completed Biology	32	29	27	30
Completed Chemistry Physics or both	43	10	12	5

Source: Sample data

[a]There are three reasons why students do not complete a given level of science: (1) By virtue of high school track placement they are not exposed to a course; (2) They took the course but did not pass it; (3) they did not elect certain courses.

In senior colleges 43 percent of SEEK students graduated high school without even completing 9th grade math, compared with but 8 percent of the regulars. Among the latter, 53 percent completed 11th year math or Intermediate Algebra, but only 9 percent of SEEK students did so.

Community college students typically were more poorly prepared in math than senior college students, but College Discovery students had even less exposure to math than their regular-admissions peers. Over half the C. D. students did not complete 9th year math, compared with a fifth of regulars. Tenth

and 11th year math was completed by 45 percent of regulars but by only 10 percent of the special students.

There are sharp differences between regular and SEEK students in science preparation (Table 17). Forty-three percent of regulars completed chemistry, physics, or both, compared with only 10 percent of SEEK students. Though community college students entered with less science preparation than their fellow students in senior colleges, there were still differences between regular and College Discovery students. Only 5 percent of the latter had completed chemistry, physics or both-- twelve percent of regulars had done so.

These differences between regular and special admissions students are undoubtedly the result of the different high school tracks into which they are placed. Special program students, particularly those in SEEK, are more likely to graduate from non-academic programs (or from diluted academic tracks).

The disparities in academic preparation between regular and special admissions students shed important light on the sources of the need for remedial services at CUNY. They suggest that deficiences in academic skills result from lack of exposure to college preparatory courses as well as from poor performance in such courses.

However, even in the college preparatory courses which they did take, special students did less well. As Table 18 shows, there are large differences in college admissions average between regular and SEEK students. Of course, these differences are not surprising, since this average is an important admission criterion for regular students, but is not used for SEEK students. While not surprising, these differences are nonetheless important because they imply substantially different probabilities of academic success in college: high school average is the single best predictor of college performance.

TABLE 18

COLLEGE ADMISSIONS AVERAGE[a]
BY ADMISSIONS STATUS

	Senior Colleges		Community Colleges	
Admissions Average	Regular	SEEK	Regular	C.D.
Missing	4%	4%	19%	7%
50-69.9	2	24	17	33
70-74.9	9	35	38	36
75-79.9	18	29	17	22
80 or higher	67	8	10	2

Source: Population data

[a]The college admissions average is computed only for those courses deemed as college preparatory by the University (e.g., English, social studies, foreign language, science, and mathematics).

In community colleges there are also differences in college admissions average between regular and College Discovery

students. The latter are more likely to have very low (50-69.9) averages, and the former are more likely to have averages of 80 or higher. But the gap between the two groups of students is narrower than in the senior colleges. Thus, one would not expect differences in college performance to be as large among the two community-college groups as among regular and SEEK students in the four-year schools.

CUNY's Freshman Skills Assessment program helps to summarize the gap in academic preparation separating regular and special program students.

TABLE 19

PERCENT PASSING FRESHMAN SKILLS ASSESSMENT TESTS BY ADMISSIONS STATUS

	Senior Colleges		Community Colleges	
	Regular	SEEK	Regular	C.D.
Passed Math Test	71	24	23	12
Passed Reading Test	80	46	53	35
Passed Writing Test	57	22	35	22

Source: Sample data

As Table 19 shows, less than one quarter of entering SEEK students were able to pass the writing test. Similarly, only 24 percent passed the math test. These percentages stand in stark contrast to those for senior-college regular students: close to

60 percent passed the writing test and more than 70 percent passed the math assessment. Though College Discovery students were less well prepared than the regular entrants in community colleges, the difference between these groups was far less dramatic than in the senior colleges. Substantial proportions of all students entered with academic deficiencies. Clearly, the burden of CUNY's remedial effort falls most heavily on its two-year institutions.

To summarize, the differences in academic preparation between regular and special program students appear to be primarily a result of tracking in high school. The special students were more likely to attend vocational high schools, or if they attended an academic school, it was more likely to be one of lesser quality. As a result, they took fewer college preparatory courses, having, for example, especially weak preparation in science and math. These gaps in exposure to academic courses create serious additional handicaps for these students. Unless they have successful remedial experiences at CUNY, one would expect them to have the most severe difficulties in any college course requiring even moderate quantitative skills (for example, in social science courses using statistical analyses). Moreover, concentrations in science, math or technical areas would appear to be closed to them, thus restricting their employment options in those careers which currently provide the higher salaries (e.g. engineering, computer science, and the like).

Educational Attitudes and Aspirations

SEEK students began college with less confidence in their academic abilities than others (Table 20).

TABLE 20

SELF RATING OF ACADEMIC ABILITY BY ADMISSIONS STATUS

Percent who think that compared with other students attending their college, they will be:

	Senior Colleges		Community Colleges	
	Regular	SEEK	Regular	C.D.
Among the brightest	11	7	8	6
Above average	44	23	28	22
Average	45	66	61	68
Below average	1	4	3	2

Source: Sample data

Only 30 percent thought they were above average in ability, compared with 55 percent of regular students. College Discovery students had less academic confidence than other community college students.

Consistent with their lower self estimates of ability, SEEK students were far more likely than other senior-college students

to think they would need help (remediation) in the basic skills areas of writing, reading, and math (Table 21).

TABLE 21

PERCENT FEELING A NEED
FOR EXTRA HELP IN BASIC SKILLS AREAS

	Senior Colleges		Community Colleges	
Skill Area	Regular	SEEK	Regular	SEEK
Writing	29	54	42	52
Reading	17	36	31	38
Math	32	67	56	65

Source: Sample data

For example, 67 percent felt they needed help in math, compared with only 32 percent of regular-admissions students. In community colleges College Discovery students were also more likely to feel they needed help than regular students, but differences were narrower than in the senior colleges.

Special program students were more likely to think they needed remediation, even if they passed their skills assessment tests. For example, among those SEEK students who passed the math test, over a third nevertheless felt they needed help. Among regular students who passed this test, only 18 percent still felt they needed help. Such findings suggest that academic self images are in part determined by prior educational

experiences, and that the influence of these experiences is in part impervious to objective educational performance.

Given their very low economic status, their prior educational disadvantages, and the relatively low estimates of their academic potential, special program students entered CUNY with surprisingly high educational aspirations. As Table 22 shows, about half of SEEK students entered college aspiring to a postbaccalaureate degree--almost as high as the proportion of regular students.

TABLE 22

DEGREE ASPIRATIONS OF REGULAR AND SPECIAL PROGRAM STUDENTS COMPARED WITH NATIONAL DATA[a]

Highest Degree Wanted	Senior Colleges		National Data	Community Colleges		National Data
	Regular	SEEK		Regular	C.D.	
None	1%	1%	1%	2%	3%	4%
Associate	1	2	1	20	28	20
Bachelor's	34	41	42	38	33	43
Master's	37	34	38	28	28	23
Professional[b]	27	21	16	11	9	9

Source: Sample data for CUNY. For national data source is as noted in Table 1.

[a]All distributions have been recalculated with responses of "don't know" and "other" removed for CUNY data. For national data "other" has been removed. National data do not contain a "don't know" response.

[b]Includes Ph.D., Ed.D., M.D., D.D.S., B.D. and the like.

The majority of community college entrants wanted to continue their studies beyond the associate degree. About 75 percent of regular and College Discovery students aspired to a bachelor's degree or higher. In short, the ultimate educational aspirations of special program students were little different from those held by other students.

Upon entry CUNY freshmen showed considerable optimism that they would persist in their collegiate studies. Over 90 percent of SEEK and College Discovery students estimated that there was little or no chance that they would drop out of their college; about the same percentage of regular students were similarly optimistic (Table 23).

TABLE 23

PERCENT OF REGULAR AND SPECIAL ADMISSIONS STUDENTS WHO ESTIMATE A STRONG CHANCE OR SOME CHANCE THAT THEY WILL:

	Senior Colleges		Community Colleges	
	Regular	SEEK	Regular	C.D.
Drop Out Permanently	7%	5%	6%	4%
Transfer Before Graduating	47	37	39	31

Source: Sample data

Though dropping out of college was seen as unlikely, quite a few students considered transferring a possibility. Indeed,

almost 50 percent of senior college regular students thought there was a "strong" chance or "some" chance that they would transfer to another college before graduating. The proportion of SEEK students who thought they might transfer was not this large, but still, almost 40 percent thought they might move. In the community colleges somewhat smaller proportions thought they might transfer. Regular students were more likely than College Discovery students to feel that transfer was a possibility.

CONCLUSION

This analysis of CUNY entrants shows that the University attracts a highly diverse student body. Relative to college students nationally, CUNY freshmen are older, more likely to be of minority origins and to come from poverty backgrounds. Special program students appear to face especially difficult academic hurdles as a result of their extremely disadvantaged educational backgrounds. Nonetheless, the University continues to enroll substantial proportions of students from more secure economic and educational backgrounds. For example, almost a fifth of regular senior college students come from families with incomes of $25,000 or higher, and almost 70 percent of senior college freshmen enter with strong high school records. The University, in short, contains an unusual mix in its student body: academically and economically needy students attend side by side with far more advantaged ones. The implications of the student mix for subsequent academic careers will be assessed in forthcoming reports.

APPENDIX A

SOCIAL BACKGROUND QUESTIONNAIRE

CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

CONFIDENTIAL STUDENT SURVEY FORM

(Please check one answer only for all questions, except where noted.)

1. *[10-11]* How old are you? ___YEARS

2. *[12]* Your Sex:

1 ☐ Male
2 ☐ Female

3. *[13]* Are you married?

1 ☐ Yes
2 ☐ No

4. *[14]* Do you have any children you are supporting?

1 ☐ Yes
2 ☐ No

5. *[15]* Where do you expect to live this fall?

1 ☐ With parents
2 ☐ With other relatives
3 ☐ With wife or husband
4 ☐ With other students or friends
5 ☐ I expect to live alone

6. *[16]* What is your best guess of the total income in your household last year? Consider income from all sources before taxes. (check one)

1 ☐ Less than $4,000
2 ☐ $ 4,000 - $ 7,499
3 ☐ $ 7,500 - $ 9,999
4 ☐ $10,000 - $12,499
5 ☐ $12,500 - $15,999
6 ☐ $16,000 - $19,999
7 ☐ $20,000 - $24,999
8 ☐ $25,000 - $29,999
9 ☐ $30,000 or more

7. *[17]* How many people does this income support?

1 ☐ One
2 ☐ Two
3 ☐ Three
4 ☐ Four
5 ☐ Five
6 ☐ Six
7 ☐ Seven
8 ☐ Eight or more

8. *[18]* Are you or your family now receiving public assistance (welfare)?

1 ☐ Yes
2 ☐ No

9. *[19]* What is the highest college degree that you want to earn? (check one)

1 ☐ None
2 ☐ Associate (A.A., A.A.S., A.S.)
3 ☐ Bachelor's degree (B.A., B.S., etc.)
4 ☐ Master's degree (M.A., M.S., etc.)
5 ☐ Ph.D., Ed.D, M.D., D.D.S., LL.B. (Law), B.D. (Divinity), etc.
6 ☐ Other
7 ☐ Don't know

10. How much education did your parents (or guardians) have?

Father [20]	Mother [21]	
1 ☐	1 ☐	8th grade or less
2 ☐	2 ☐	Some high school
3 ☐	3 ☐	High school graduate
4 ☐	4 ☐	Some College
5 ☐	5 ☐	College graduate
6 ☐	6 ☐	Postgraduate degree

11. *[22]* Which of the following best describes your job situation for this fall?

1 ☐ I have a part-time job
2 ☐ I have a full-time job
3 ☐ I'm looking for a part-time job
4 ☐ I'm looking for a full-time job
5 ☐ I don't plan to be working

12. *[23]* Which one of the following ethnic categories best describes you?

1 ☐ Hispanic or Latin
2 ☐ Black (non-Hispanic)
3 ☐ White (non-Hispanic)
4 ☐ American Indian
5 ☐ Asian or Pacific Islander

13. *[24-25]* From what country or part of the world did you or your family originally come? (If from more than one place, please check the one to which you feel closest.)

1 ☐ Africa
2 ☐ China
3 ☐ Other Asian (specify): _____
4 ☐ Colombia
5 ☐ Cuba
6 ☐ Dominican Republic
7 ☐ Ecuador
8 ☐ Haiti
9 ☐ Jamaica
10 ☐ Puerto Rico
11 ☐ Other Caribbean or Latin American (specify): _____
12 ☐ England, Scotland, or Wales
13 ☐ Germany
14 ☐ Greece
15 ☐ Ireland
16 ☐ Italy
17 ☐ Poland
18 ☐ Russia
19 ☐ Other European (specify): _____
20 ☐ Other country than above: _____
21 ☐ Don't know

14. Current religious preference: (check one in each column)

Yours [26]	Father's [27]	Mother's [28]	
1 ☐	1 ☐	1 ☐	Catholic
2 ☐	2 ☐	2 ☐	Protestant
3 ☐	3 ☐	3 ☐	Jewish
4 ☐	4 ☐	4 ☐	No preference
5 ☐	5 ☐	5 ☐	Other (please specify): _____

15. *[29]* Which one of the following best describes your participation in high school extracurricular activities (such as dramatics, student government, clubs, sports, etc.)?

1 ☐ I participated a lot
2 ☐ I participated to some extent
3 ☐ I participated a little
4 ☐ I participated very rarely or not at all

16. *[30]* What kind of diploma did you earn?

1 ☐ High school diploma
2 ☐ High school equivalency (GED)
3 ☐ No diploma earned yet (IF NOT EARNED YET, GO TO QUESTION 18)

17. *[31-32]* In what year did you get this diploma or equivalency?

19_____

18. *[33]* Have you any brothers or sisters who attended college or who are now attending?

1 ☐ Yes
2 ☐ No

19. *[34]* In thinking about your further education after high school, what kind of college or school was your *first choice*? (check one)

1 ☐ A 2 year college of the *State* University of New York (SUNY)
2 ☐ A 4 year college of the *State* University of New York (SUNY)
3 ☐ A *private* college in New York *City*
4 ☐ A *private* college in New York *State*
5 ☐ A college *outside* New York State
6 ☐ A 2 year college of *City University* of New York (CUNY)
7 ☐ A 4 year college of *City University* of New York (CUNY)
8 ☐ A technical, trade, or other special school

20. *[35]* In which one of the following will you *actually* enroll this fall? (check one)

GO TO QUEST. 21 < 1 ☐ I will not be attending any college

GO TO QUEST. 22 <
2 ☐ A 2 year college of the *State* University of New York (SUNY)
3 ☐ A 4 year college of the *State* University of New York (SUNY)
4 ☐ A *private* college in New York *City*
5 ☐ A *private* college in New York *State*
6 ☐ A college *outside* New York State
7 ☐ A 2 year college of *City University* of New York (CUNY)
8 ☐ A 4 year college of *City University* of New York (CUNY)
9 ☐ A technical, trade, or other special school

21. If you will not attend college, this fall, how important was each of the following in affecting your decision?

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Of Little or no Importance
[36] I could not afford college	1☐	2☐	3☐
[37] I decided I didn't want to go	1☐	2☐	3☐
[38] I wanted to get married	1☐	2☐	3☐
[39] I wanted to get a job	1☐	2☐	3☐
[40] My parents didn't want me to go	1☐	2☐	3☐
[41] I'm tired of school	1☐	2☐	3☐
[42] A family emergency came up	1☐	2☐	3☐
[43] I was worried that college work would be too hard for me	1☐	2☐	3☐
[44] I have a health problem or disability	1☐	2☐	3☐
[45] I haven't graduated high school yet	1☐	2☐	3☐
[46] Other reason: ___	1☐	2☐	3☐

IF YOU ARE NOT ATTENDING COLLEGE THIS FALL, YOUR QUESTIONNAIRE IS NOW COMPLETED. PLEASE PUT IT IN THE RETURN ENVELOPE (NO POSTAGE NEEDED) AND MAIL IT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

22. *[47-48, 49-50]* From among the following, check the *two* most important reasons you selected the particular college or school you are attending this fall:

1☐ It has a reputation for academic excellence
2☐ It is less expensive
3☐ It is near my home
4☐ My friends are going there
5☐ I wanted to go out of town
6☐ My parents wanted me to go there
7☐ It has a program I wanted
8☐ It offered financial aid
9☐ It was the only place to accept me
10☐ Teacher or counselor suggested it
11☐ Students like myself go there
12☐ Other: _____

23. *[51]* How many friends from high school or your neighborhood are going to *this college* with you?

1☐ None
2☐ One or Two
3☐ Three or Four
4☐ Five or more

24. *[52]* How many friends from high school or your neighborhood are going to *some other college*?

1☐ None
2☐ One or Two
3☐ Three or Four
4☐ Five or more

25. *[53-54]* What would you say are your two most important reasons for going to college? (check two)

1☐ To be able to get a better job
2☐ To prepare for graduate school
3☐ My parents wanted me to go
4☐ Nothing better to do right now
5☐ To gain a general education and appreciation of ideas
6☐ To be able to contribute more to my community
7☐ To meet new and interesting people
8☐ To be able to make more money
9☐ To learn more about things that interest me

26. Do you feel you need any tutoring or extra help in any of the following areas?

	Need Help	Don't Need Help
[55] Writing	1☐	2☐
[56] Reading	1☐	2☐
[57] Math	1☐	2☐

27. *[58]* Do you think graduating from this college will help you get a better job?

1☐ I'm almost certain it will help
2☐ It probably will help
3☐ I'm not sure if it will help
4☐ It probably won't help

28. How important is each of the following in helping you to pay for college?

	Of Major Importance	Of Minor Importance	Of No Importanc
[59] N.Y. State Tuition Assistance Program (TAP)	1☐	2☐	3☐
[60] Basic Educational Opportunity Grant (BEOG)	1☐	2☐	3☐
[61] Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG)	1☐	2☐	3☐
[62] Stipend from SEEK or College Discovery Program	1☐	2☐	3☐
[63] Guaranteed Student Loan (GSL)	1☐	2☐	3☐
[64] National Direct Student Loan (NDSL)	1☐	2☐	3☐
[65] Employment during the summer	1☐	2☐	3☐
[66] Personal savings	1☐	2☐	3☐
[67] Employment during the school year	1☐	2☐	3☐
[68] Family support or aid	1☐	2☐	3☐
[69] Veteran's benefits from your military service	1☐	2☐	3☐
[70] Employer contribution	1☐	2☐	3☐

29. *[71]* In terms of ability, where do you think you will stand in comparison with other students attending this college?

1☐ Among the brightest
2☐ Above average
3☐ Average
4☐ Below Average
5☐ Well below average

30. What is your best guess as to the chances that you will: (check one in each row)

	Strong Chance	Some Chance	Little Chance	No Chance
[72] Drop out of this college temporarily?	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐
[73] Drop out of this college permanently?	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐
[74] Transfer to another college before graduating?	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION. PLEASE PUT THE COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIR
IN THE RETURN ENVELOPE AND MAIL IT (NO POSTAGE NEEDED)AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

Below: please make any necessary corrections in name, address or social security number shown on the first page of the questionnaire:

Corrections:

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

_____

SOCIAL SECURITY: _____

APPENDIX B

COMPARISON OF SAMPLE WITH POPULATION

Since the analyses of this and a number of forthcoming reports are based on a sample of the 1980 freshman population, it is necessary to assess the sample's representativeness by comparing it to the population, using variables measured for both. Some sample and population data are presented in Table B.1.

Since all of the tables in this report control for level of college and type of admissions status (regular versus special program status), comparisons between the sample and the population are best done with such controls, and we have included them in Table B.1.

To make a broad assessment of the comparability of the sample and population we have chosen a range of variables from data available in our high school background file (compiled and provided for us by the University Applications Processing Center).

One of the most important of these background variables is high school average, the major basis for allocating students to senior or community colleges and the single best predictor of academic performance in college. Examination of the population

and sample distributions suggest that overall, the sample is a good representation of the population. Among regular admissions students in senior colleges the sample does contain a higher proportion of more able students (that is, with average of 80 or better) than does the population, but the difference is not large: 72 percent of the sample and 67 percent of the population had averages of 80 or above. Among the other categories of students, the sample-population distributions approximate one another very well.

A second important comparison variable is the percentile rank in the high school graduating class. In the sample of senior college regular students, the proportion at or above the 85th percentile is slightly higher than the population. Otherwise the sample-population distributions are very close.

Another comparison variable is the year in which the student graduated from high school. Sample-population distributions again correspond very closely.

With regard to age, the sample does, for the most part, correspond very closely to the population. There is one departure from this overall conclusion: among community college regular admits, the sample contains a higher proportion of older students. However, the difference is fairly small: 52 percent of the sample were 20 or older at entry compared with 48 percent in the population.

Though the differences are rather small, there is one variable, gender, for which there appears to be a consistent discrepancy between sample and population: the proportion of females in each sample category exceeds that found in the comparable population category. However, in three of four cases these differences are only 3 percentage points. While small, these differences will need to be taken into account in future reports, especially those concerned with academic performance, since females typically compile stronger academic records than do males.

While population measures are obviously unavailable for every variable measured in our sample, overall these comparisons show a close correspondence between the sample and population. Although the sample of senior college regular students contains a slightly greater proportion of academically able students than in the analogous population segment and females are slightly overrepresented, the results of these analyses are gratifying: we do not find grounds for skepticism concerning the conclusions we have drawn from the sample.

Table B.1

Comparison of Sample with Population for Selected Variables: 1980 Freshmen

Comparison Group	High School Average					High School Percentile					Year of High School Graduation				Gender		Age			
	Missing	70	70-74.9	75-79.9	80+	Missing	65	65-75	76-85	85+	75	76-78	79	80	M	F	17	18	19	20+
Sen. Coll. Reg.:																				
Sample	2	2	7	17	72	33	14	13	15	25	6	5	6	83	40	60	11	60	12	17
Population	4	2	9	18	67	39	14	12	14	20	6	6	6	82	44	56	12	59	12	16
Sen. Coll. SEEK:																				
Sample	3	22	37	28	10	36	41	11	7	6	5	6	8	80	33	67	3	49	22	26
Population	4	24	35	29	8	36	42	10	7	5	5	5	8	82	36	64	3	50	23	24
Comm. Coll. Reg:																				
Sample	12	16	42	19	12	67	25	3	2	2	17	13	12	58	40	60	3	31	14	52
Population	19	17	38	17	10	68	26	3	2	2	17	13	12	59	43	57	3	35	15	48
Comm. C.D.:																				
Sample	5	32	38	22	2	35	51	7	4	3	6	6	8	81	30	70	2	46	25	27
Population	7	32	36	22	2	37	49	8	4	2	6	5	7	82	33	67	3	46	26	26

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